

AGENDA ITEM VI A 1

PROGRESS REPORT ON CONDITIONALLY APPROVED PROGRAM

NICHOLLS STATE UNIVERSITY

B.S. IN GEOMATICS

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At its meeting of March 26, 2003, the Board of Regents took the following action:

Approval is granted for the proposed B. S. program in Geomatics (CIP Code 15.1102) at Nicholls State University, effective Fall 2003. By April 1, 2004, the University shall submit to the Commissioner of Higher Education a progress report addressing all concerns identified in the staff summary.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The B.S. program in Geomatics at Nicholls State University (NSU) is housed in the Department of Applied Sciences within the College of Life Sciences and Technology. Concerns to be addressed in the progress report included the need for additional faculty hires, the number of students enrolled, and anticipated financial support from a variety of sources.

1. Need for Additional Faculty

The program was initiated in the summer of 2003 with one full-time faculty member. A national search for two positions has been advertised for one position to begin Fall 2004 and one to commence Spring 2005. By Fall 2004, freshman-, sophomore-, and junior-level courses must be available to new and advancing students. An offer has been made and accepted by a candidate with a doctorate in geomatics from the University of Florida. This individual will begin employment in Fall 2004.

For full program implementation, three full-time faculty are needed in order to offer program courses at adequate frequency to permit timely graduation of students. Three candidates are currently under consideration for the position opening in the spring semester of 2005.

2. Number of Students Enrolled

As the program ends its first year, the number of students continuing for years two and three exceeds expectations. At least fifteen incoming students, the number of freshman originally projected for year two, are expected for the coming semester. Nineteen students are pre-enrolled for sophomore-level courses in Fall 2004; six sophomores were originally projected for year two. Contact information has been recorded for fifty-four other interested individuals. A recruiting brochure and poster have recently

been completed and will be distributed to high schools around the state. The program director has been advised of the protocol for inclusion of the geomatics program in the Academic Common Market, which would make the program available to students from states without geomatics at in-state tuition and fees.

3. Financial support

In June 2003, funds for endowed professorships in geomatics were donated to NSU by Morris P. Hebert, Inc., T. Baker Smith and Son, both consulting engineering and surveying firms located in Houma, and by the Louisiana Contractors Association. The staff anticipate that decisions regarding the support of endowed professorships will be made in June. At that time, NSU will determine which professorships will receive the matching funds.

National Electronics, Inc., a surveying instrument vendor located in Lafayette, provided two instruments, priced over \$25,000, to geomatics for less than one third of the retail price.

The Louisiana Society of Professional Surveyors (LSPS) strongly supported upgrading the educational requirements for registration as a Professional Land Surveyor and recommended Nicholls State University as the institution to offer geomatics in Louisiana. The Society will assist in placing students into the summer internship program. The Educational Committee of LSPS is establishing endowments for student scholarships.

STAFF SUMMARY

An additional progress report documenting the hire of a third geomatics faculty and verifying that adequate resources are available for the program would assure the Board of Regents that this new endeavor for the State and NSU is progressing appropriately.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The staff recommends that the Academic and Student Affairs Committee receive the AY 2003-2004 Progress Report from Nicholls State University Relative to Implementation of the Bachelor of Science Program in Geomatics. A second progress report addressing continuing faculty needs shall be due by June 1, 2005.